

OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE PROGRAM

Off Highway Vehicle Overview:

The Field Operations Division Law Enforcement Branch in Phoenix administers the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) management efforts, while other work units also do work in the OHV program. OHV personnel within the Law Enforcement Branch provide support and administration to other work units within the Department.

Providing accurate, timely information promotes broad public understanding and helps prevent user conflicts. Valuable information concerning safety, rules and regulations, operating tips, and reducing environmental impacts can assist the OHV user in making their OHV experience enjoyable.

OHV use can be a safe, enjoyable, low impact activity when approached within the confines of the law, on established roads, trails, or use areas, and with common sense. The opposite is true, when OHV recreation is approached with disregard for the environment, and a lack of respect for other recreationists or personal safety. To help promote responsible OHV use and to deter unsafe OHV use, laws, and guidelines have been created which outline safe, legal, and common sense approaches to OHV activities.

Most OHV recreation occurs on public lands managed by other agencies. In Arizona, 70% of our 114,000 square miles are under federal jurisdiction. The Bureau of Land Management controls 12 million acres (17% of the state), while the U.S. Forest Service manages 11 million acres (15%). Other federal agencies, including the Department of Defense, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, manage seven million acres (10%), and 20 Native American Tribes manage 20 million acres (28%). Another 10 million acres (13%) are state-owned land, most of which are administered by the Arizona State Land Department on behalf of common schools and 12 other trust beneficiaries.

It is only through cooperation that we will be able to accomplish most of the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. Coordination efforts between the Department and other agencies and organizations have resulted in the following accomplishments:

It is possible that significant OHV legislative changes are passed before the end of this two-year operational plan, and the Department may explore revising this plan in light of these changes.

OPERATIONAL APPROACHES:

OHV Information

1. Assist in developing and distributing maps and brochures identifying OHV use areas, opportunities, designated trails and routes. Include habitats and wildlife that are particularly sensitive to OHV use. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.3, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9, 2.C.1)
2. Provide information at mall/trade/fair shows, distribute OHV materials to clubs, dealers, OHV parts shops etc., and expand current, and explore new avenues for dissemination of OHV

information such as the Internet, billboards, etc. Conduct outreach events at heavily used OHV areas. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.3, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9, 2.C.1)

3. Develop an OHV responsible riding message and promote through mass media, and provide OHV related articles for newspapers, magazines, newsletters, etc. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.3, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9, 2.C.1)
4. Identify areas of need and provide signs that delineate and explain OHV use or closure areas. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.3, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9, 2.C.1)
5. Create an OHV information page in the Arizona Game and Fish Department hunt booklet. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.3, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9, 2.C.1)
6. Provide an annual review of existing laws, regulations and legislative changes related to OHV's. (1.A.2, 1.A.4)
7. Develop and use an OHV interest mailing list. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.3, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9, 2.C.1)

OHV Education

1. Work with OHV clubs to promote responsible riding message. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 3.C.1)
2. Incorporate OHV safety and environmental impact issues into hunter and angler education classes. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 3.C.1)
3. Integrate OHV safety and responsible riding with OHV classes taught by individuals or organizations. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 3.C.1, 2.D.1-4)
4. Work with OHV dealers and rental companies to develop a new rider training program on OHV safety and responsible riding. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 3.C.1, 2.D.1-4)
5. Train volunteer instructors in safety, laws, regulations, and responsible riding. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 3.C.1, 2.D.1-4, 4.A.8)

Employee OHV Training

1. Develop an OHV Law Enforcement Vision to guide Department LE efforts and provide training to all Department Officers. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 4.A.6)
2. Provide training to new Officers during post-academy training on ATV operation, and OHV law enforcement for each class of trainees. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 4.A.6)

3. In this planning period develop a more comprehensive OHV law enforcement training course for internal and external Officers modeled after the Department's Watercraft Enforcement School that combines a review of laws, enforcement methods, OHV operation, and tactics with the initial class targeted for the spring of 2008. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 4.A.6)
4. Assist in conducting specialty courses in 4x4 and ATV operation to general, non-law enforcement personnel on an as needed basis. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 4.A.6)

OHV Law Enforcement

1. Conduct routine OHV patrols to increase voluntary compliance with laws and rules through prosecution of violations and to educate OHV users on safe, legal, and ethical use of OHVs. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
2. Conduct targeted patrols in high use, high violation, closed, and sensitive areas to increase voluntary compliance with laws and rules through prosecution of violations and to educate OHV users on safe, legal, and ethical use of OHVs. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
3. Include OHV enforcement, outreach, and education during hunt patrols. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
4. Evaluate the use of remote sensing equipment and fixed-wing surveillance to monitor and assist with apprehending OHV violators. (1.A.2, 1.A.4)
5. Review and revise Title 17 and Commission Rules relating to OHV activities, as necessary. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
6. Evaluate the need for posting signs or using other informational tools in sensitive areas to inform and educate users of OHV regulations. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
7. Examine new program funding opportunities and continue to work with Department legislative staff and OHV user groups to facilitate adequate program funding. (3.A.6)
8. Coordinate with other land management agencies to work toward consistency and understanding in OHV regulations. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 2.D.1-4)
9. Coordinate management projects and programs with municipal governments that oversee areas of high OHV use. (1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 2.D.1-4)
10. Phoenix based officer support will be directed as per the following OHV enforcement emphasis (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.5, 1.B.6, 1.B.9, 2.D.2):
 - i. July-Sept Quarter – Patrol of high OHV use in forested areas (Regions I, II, and VI)
 - ii. Oct-Dec Quarter – OHV patrol related to hunt activity (all Regions)

- OHV patrol of high use desert areas/events (Regions IV, V, and VI)
- iii. Jan-Mar Quarter –OHV patrol in conjunction with antler hunting (Regions I, II, III, VI)
OHV patrol of high use desert areas/events (Regions IV, V, and VI)
- iv. Apr-Jun Quarter – Patrol of high OHV use in forested areas (Regions I, II, and VI).
OHV patrol of high use desert areas/events (Regions IV, V, and VI)

OHV Influenced Habitat Loss Assessments, Mitigation, and Responsive Management

1. Develop an OHV issue reporting system identifying methods of collection, location of database, distribution of information, and annual reporting to determine problem areas. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
2. Investigate OHV issues reported and coordinate with land management agencies to take appropriate action to decrease and/or mitigate habitat loss. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 2.D.1-4)
3. Recommend and participate in the development of OHV use areas to reduce OHV use in sensitive wildlife habitat. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
4. Use GIS to map sensitive areas and road densities. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1)
5. Coordinate with other land management agencies to work toward consistency and understanding in OHV regulations. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 2.D.1-4)
6. Continue to use responsive management to determine the needs of a variety of constituent groups (OHV users, hunters, OHV industry, the general public). (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.B.8, 1.B.9, 2.A.1, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.B.9)
7. Educate Department personnel on appropriate use of job codes to facilitate analysis of OHV-related projects. (1.A.4, 2.B.9)
8. Encourage agencies to consider OHV user input in the “closure area” decision-making process. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 2.D.1-4)
9. When coordinating hunter access issues within the Landowner Relations Program, incorporate the needs and input of OHV users where appropriate. (1.A.2, 1.A.4, 1.A.9, 2.B.1, 2.B.2, 2.C.1, 2.D.1-4)

LINKAGES WITH OTHER OPERATIONAL PLANS

Business Administration Program:

Human Resources: The Wildlife Law Enforcement Program regularly receives support from the Human Resources function of the Department.

Financial Management: The Wildlife Law Enforcement Program regularly receives support from the Financial Management function of the Department.

Asset management: The Wildlife Law Enforcement Program regularly receives support from the Asset Management function of the Department.

Information Technology: The Wildlife Law Enforcement Program regularly receives support from the Information Technology function of the Department.

Sportfish Subprogram:

OHV activities can affect watersheds and sportfish populations. LEB will coordinate with the Sportfish subprogram to determine areas that need focused OHV law enforcement patrols and/or outreach during the cross-program coordination meeting and the implementation planning process.

Game Subprogram:

OHV activities can impact game populations, habitat, and hunting activities. LEB will coordinate with the Game subprogram to determine areas that need focused OHV law enforcement patrols and/or outreach during the cross-program coordination meeting and the implementation planning process.

Nongame Subprogram:

OHV activities can impact nongame populations, habitat, and wildlife related recreational activities. LEB will coordinate with the Nongame subprogram to determine areas that need focused OHV law enforcement patrols and/or outreach during the cross-program coordination meeting and the implementation planning process.

Information & Education Projects:

LEB works closely with the I&E projects to provide project-related or wildlife information for mass media inquiries, information and education outreach support and materials for OHV law enforcement projects statewide, review and edit Department press releases for OHV topics, and to develop and distribute outreach materials to the OHV public that encourage safe and responsible use while promoting voluntary compliance.

Research Project:

There are not any plans currently for the OHV Law Enforcement Program to work directly with the Research project. However, should the Research project identify a law enforcement need associated with any of their activities, LEB can accommodate their needs through the cross programs and implementation planning processes. Additionally, as LEB continues to develop a data driven enforcement program, we may request support from the Research project in developing data analysis processes.

Habitat Project:

LEB will be working cooperatively with the Habitat project in coordinating with land management agencies to incorporate OHV issues and recommendations into the federal planning process. The two work units will also be coordinating many of the OHV damage assessment initiatives outlined above.

Wildlife Area Project:

While the Development project has statewide responsibility for Wildlife Area Management, regional wildlife program personnel manage each individual Wildlife Area. Regional law enforcement personnel currently coordinate law enforcement needs on these areas. The Wildlife Law Enforcement project regularly provides support to the Wildlife Area project, as needed, as coordinated through the cross-program and implementation planning processes.